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SCRIPTURE MARKS

OF

SALVATION.

FIRST.

GOD so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John iii. 16

QUEST. I. *Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*

1. Have I been convinced of my lost and undone state and condition? Have I been seriously and deeply concerned what I shall do to be saved? Does every other concern, however once it might have seemed important, now appear trifling, when compared with this of my eternal salvation? Do I now look upon the care of my soul as the one thing needful; and whatever I neglect, can I no longer neglect this; but are my chief thoughts, and cares, and labours, employed here? Has this concern about my salvation made me earnest and importunate in offering up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto God, for the salvation of my soul, humbly yet fervently begging that whatever he denies me, my precious soul may be saved? Have I been brought to see the utter impossibility of being saved by any works or righteousness of my own? Has this been the genuine conviction and language of my heart, If thou shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Helpless and hopeless in myself, is all my hope in the free grace of God, and the discovery of his mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ?

2. Has the news of salvation by Jesus Christ been welcomed by me with the greatest joy and thankfulness?

Do I esteem it as the best tidings that ever reached my ears, and the choicest mercy that could ever be imparted unto my soul? Is the report which the gospel gives of Jesus Christ, his godhead, his manhood, his fulness, his freeness, his willingness and his ability to save sinners to the uttermost, received by me with the fullest confidence, the highest joy, and the warmest gratitude? Are *such truths* delightful as music to my ears, better than a cordial to my heart, and more valued by me than all the treasures of the richest mines? Do I see, admire, and adore, the wonders of Divine wisdom and love, which shine forth with united splendour in this way of salvation by a crucified Jesus? So far from taking offence at the cross of Christ, do I derive my sweetest comforts from it, and make my greatest boast and triumph in it? Do I see a divine glory in the way of salvation by faith, and do I joyfully and thankfully submit to be saved in this way? Am I made heartily willing to be saved on the soul-humblings, self-denying terms of the gospel—willing to renounce my own wisdom, my own righteousness, and my own strength, and willing that the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ, should be alone exalted in my salvation? Do I entirely approve of, and am I sincerely pleased with, this method of salvation in the gospel, by which God “hides pride from man, and suffers no flesh to glory in his presence, that he that glorieth may glory only in the Lord?”

3. As guilty and condemned, helpless and hopeless in myself, have I come to Christ at his free invitation; and do I thankfully receive and humbly rest on Him alone for salvation. Renouncing all self-dependence, do I place all my hope of pardon and acceptance with God, and my expectation of eternal life, in his adorable merits? Is this all my plea, my joy, and my boast? Have I come to him as weary and heavy laden with my sins; and do I groan to be delivered from the power as well as the guilt of them? And have I come to Christ, not only as my righteousness to justify and pardon me, but as my sanctification to purify and cleanse me? Do I see it to be as great a blessing; and do I desire and pray for it as earnestly, to be sanctified by his Spirit, as to be justified in his name? With him have I left my poor trembling soul, resolving to lie at his feet, and if I perish, to perish

there; humbly imploring and trusting in His mercy, while it is my sincere desire and daily care to do His will, and approve myself to Him in every thing?

4. Is the Lord Jesus Christ precious to me? Whereas he was once without form or comeliness, and I saw no beauty in him that I should desire him; is he now to me the chiefest of ten thousand, and altogether lovely? Do I behold an infinite amiableness and glory in his person, a transcendent excellence in his righteousness, an inexhaustible fulness in his grace, and a heaven of happiness in his love? Do I esteem him above every name, love him above every creature and thing, and value an interest in him before ten thousand worlds? Is the language of my soul now, None but Christ, none but Christ? Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee? Is all the world, and all that is admired in it, esteemed by me as dung, and beheld with the greatest contempt, when compared with a glorious Christ, the sweetness of his love, and the unsearchable riches of his grace? Do I wish nothing so ardently, seek nothing so diligently, and rejoice in nothing so greatly, as to win Christ, and be found in him? Can I say, be this my portion, and I want, I wish, I ask no more?

5. Has my faith a purifying influence upon my heart? Does the view of Christ dying for my sins make me die to them? And can I no longer indulge, no longer look with indifference on, those sins which made my Saviour die; which cost him a bloody agony, a bitter passion, a shameful, painful, and accursed death? But has my faith in Christ, as "wounded for my transgressions, and bruised for mine iniquities," made me bitterly lament them, sincerely hate them, and vow to be the death of them, of every one of them? Though there may be still much sin in me, is there none allowed? Is there none, no not one, no not that sin which does most easily beset me, which I desire to be spared and excused in? Do I rather look upon all sin as the enemy of Christ, and my own soul; and as such, do I hate it with a perfect hatred? Am I praying fervently for divine grace to subdue it; and in the strength of that grace, do I maintain a constant and vigorous war against it, determined never to give it any rest in my heart, never to cease my conflict with it, till I have gained the complete and everlasting victory?

6. Is my faith productive of unfeigned love and willing obedience? Does it kindle in my heart ardent love and gratitude to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for this unspeakable gift of his love, this invaluable provision he has made for the salvation of poor sinners in his dear Son? Does it constrain, sweetly and powerfully constrain me, to love, and live, to this adorable Redeemer, who hath loved me, and given himself for me? Does the believing sense of his immensely great, his wonderfully free love, in dying for me, with all the rich, precious, and everlasting fruits of it, win my whole heart? And do I feel myself irresistibly drawn by these cords of love, and bound for ever to him and to his service by these endearing bands? Do I no longer look upon myself as my own, but as his, and rejoice in being so; and am I the cheerful thankful servant of him who has purchased me with his own blood? Do I most willingly, sincerely, and unreservedly dedicate all I am and have to his service and disposal? Do I own no other Lord, having no other Saviour: and is his service sweet, and obedience to him most delightful? As he has particularly charged me, so am I careful, ready, and willing, to maintain good works: not that I may be justified by them, (which I can never expect, as the best are so polluted and defective,) but that I may glorify my Father who is in heaven, testify my gratitude to my dear Redeemer, evidence to the world my faith in him, adorn his gospel, be useful to others, and exercise the kindest and sweetest affections of my own soul in doing good?

Is this the case with thee, O my soul? Can I, as in the presence of God, answer with any degree of satisfaction these weighty and important questions? Am I not conscious to myself of any insincerity, partiality, or reserve? I may then comfortably conclude, that I have that faith which is the special gift of God. And, oh! let me ever admire and adore the infinite riches of his distinguishing grace, that he has thus brought me out of darkness into his marvellous light, and made me an heir of complete and everlasting salvation!

SECOND.

As many as *received* him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God. John i. 12

QUEST. II. *Do I receive the Lord Jesus Christ as he is represented in the gospel?*

1. Do I receive him in all his offices of prophet, priest, and king? Do I see that I absolutely need him as a prophet to instruct and teach me; as a priest to atone for my sins, and intercede with God for me; as a king to rule in me and over me, to subdue all my corruptions in me, and all my enemies for me? Am I as heartily willing, and do I as readily submit, to be taught and governed, as to be saved by him? Is it a complete salvation, a salvation from the reigning power of sin, as well as from its condemning guilt I take him for, and hope and desire to enjoy by him? As a whole Christ, and considered in all his various characters, do I esteem him, rejoice in him, and bless God for him? Do I desire him, and do I take him to redeem me from all iniquity, as well as to deliver me from the wrath to come; to sanctify me by his Spirit, as well as to justify me by his righteousness; to renew in me the divine image, as well as to restore me to the divine favour? Do I wish as earnestly to be conformed to his holy example, as to be interested in his invaluable merits? Do I most heartily desire him, thankfully embrace him, entirely depend upon him, as God exhibits him, and as the necessity of my soul, which is ignorant and guilty, polluted and enslaved, requires him, for wisdom and righteousness, for sanctification and redemption?

2. Do I receive him as my only Saviour? Do I see an all-sufficiency in his righteousness, as wrought out in his active and passive obedience, to answer all the demands of the holy law of God, and satisfy divine justice to the full? On this, and this alone, as having no other, and wanting no other righteousness, do I firmly rely for my pardon and acceptance with God; and is it my only plea for eternal life? Have I no confidence in the flesh, no hope in what I have been or done; sensible there has been so much amiss in my best tempers and my best services, that instead of recommending me to the favour of God, I need his pardon through Christ for the same? Do I see I have nothing to glory in, and do I desire to glory in nothing, save the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? And am I sincerely pleased with, and do I joyfully acquiesce

in, the Divine appointment, that Christ, having done all, suffered all, paid all, should have all the honour and all the praise? Do I desire to be for ever on Mount Zion, in his train, as purchased, justified, sanctified, glorified by him, and to stand there as an everlasting monument of his love, power, and grace? And do I now with pleasure think of bearing my grateful part with all the myriads of his redeemed ones, in that sweetest song of gratitude and love, and everlasting thankfulness, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!

3. Do I receive him, and do I esteem him, as an invaluable treasure, as the pearl of great price, as all in all? Do I see that the possession of all the world without Christ would leave me miserable, and that an interest in him, with the want of all earthly things, would make me perfectly and eternally happy? Does this make me desire him ardently as the greatest blessing, receive him thankfully as the richest gift; and be ready, joyfully ready, to forego any thing, and every thing, for an interest in him alone? Yea, doubtless, do I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord? And can I cheerfully suffer the loss of all things, and count them but dung, that I may win that inestimable treasure, Christ Jesus: accounting myself an infinite gainer in the glorious exchange, if, in the loss of all things, I possess him in whom alone I shall be safe, and rich, and happy for ever? While others are rejoicing in the abundance of this world, is this my joy, this my humble boast, that Christ is mine, his righteousness mine, his grace mine, his love mine, his God and Father mine? Or, at least, can I say, I had rather be in the condition of the meanest that have an interest in Christ, than be the greatest monarch in the world; rather have Christ in the arms of my faith, than have the treasures of princes in my possession? Is this the language of my heart, Be the world theirs who have no other portion; they shall, unenvied by me, possess all the honours, and riches, and pleasures of it, let me but have the honour of being owned by Christ, let me but have the riches of his righteousness, and the happiness of his love?

4. Do I receive him as he is freely represented, without

money and without price? Am I sensible I have nothing to bring as an equivalent for, or that can render me the least worthy of, him and his precious benefits? Do I come to him as wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, having nothing to present him with but sin, and guilt, and misery; and is my hope alone in his free and boundless compassion? Is his grace as absolutely and altogether free, (no unworthiness, unfitness, or demerit whatever, being any bar) my greatest encouragement, my highest joy, and my sweetest praise? Do I receive him with the grateful acknowledgment of the Apostle, Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift? Is this my daily language here, and will this be my sweetest song to all eternity—Grace, grace?

5. Do I receive him and his yoke together? Have I no objection to his service, no exception to any of his commandments? Do I rather esteem his yoke to be easy, and his service to be my supreme delight? Can I never be enough thankful that I have changed the hard and galling yoke of Satan for the easy, gentle yoke of Christ; the slavery of sin for the liberty, peace, and pleasure of religion? Do I as readily admit Christ with his sceptre to govern me, as with his blessings to bestow upon me? Do I receive him as my Lord, as well as my righteousness, and welcome him, with unutterable joy, to the throne in my heart? Do I desire him to ascend it, and reign there for ever? wishing for no greater happiness, than to be his devoted faithful subject, even unto death, beyond it, and to all eternity? Like the servant under the law, can I freely say of Christ, I love him, I love his service, and will not go out free, esteeming his service alone my noblest, sweetest freedom? Am I longing to join the angels round the throne in executing with their zeal and ardour, their life and vigour, his heavenly commands; and will it be a heaven to me to do his will and serve him as they do?

6. Do I receive him with his cross and sufferings; and can I welcome the world's bitterest hatred and severest injuries in his cause and for his sake? Am I willing to go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach? Yea, do I esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of this world, and all that I can suffer for him infinitely overbalanced with what I enjoy in him? Have I counted the cost; and do I upon the

calnest and most serious view of things, count the loss of name, of friends, of riches, of honour, of pleasure, yea of life itself, nothing, when compared with his love and enjoyment? Had I rather die for him, and go and enjoy him, than to live without him, and reign to the uttermost ends of the earth? Do I think nothing too dear to part with, nothing too hard to submit to, nothing too painful to endure, in my adherence to him and his ways, who left heaven, laid aside his divine glory, and humbled himself unto death, even the death of the cross, in love to me, and for my salvation? Does this love of his sweeten, and even endear to me, every suffering for him, while it makes me triumphant, and more than conqueror over them all?

Are these some of the marks, these the characters of the Christian? Surely, O my soul, I can say, I would then be like him. My heart surely speaks something of this language. Is it not so? Am I deceiving myself? Lord, search me, and try me, and suffer me not to draw a false conclusion, or be partial in a matter of everlasting moment. I must be just to myself; and, Lord, I will be humbly bold to say, I will take the comfort, when my conscience, and thy Spirit too, give me reason to hope that thou art mine.

THIRD

Grace be with all them that *love* our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity! Ephes. vi. 24

QUEST. III. *Do I love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity?*

1. Do I love him in his whole person, as God-man? Do I behold him, as one in whose blessed person all excellences meet, as one in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily? As such, is he the object of my supreme adoration, my unbounded confidence, my choicest affections, my chief delight, my all in all? Do I love him in his whole character? Is an entire and undivided Christ amiable and acceptable to me, and do I see him as altogether necessary, and so altogether precious? Do I love, esteem, and prize him, as my teacher and lawgiver as well as the atonement for my sins, and my advocate

with the Father? Do I love him in the purity and strictness of his precepts, as well as in the freeness and preciousness of his promises? Do I see a glory in the holiness of his life, as well as in the meritoriousness of his death? and do I desire to follow him as my perfect pattern, as well as trust him as my great propitiation?

2. Do I love every thing that has relation to him? Do I love his word? Is it more desired by me than gold, yea than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb? Do I love to read it? Do I with pleasure embrace all opportunities to hear it? Do I lay it up in my heart, and make it the delightful subject of my meditation? Do I make it the only rule of my life, and is it my principal aim and my chief delight to walk agreeably to it? Do I love his day, and call the Sabbath a delight? Do I welcome its return as the best day in the week, and the religious exercises of it as the best employment? Do I love all his ordinances, as means of communion with him? Are no seasons so delightful as those in which I am favoured with his enjoyment? Do I love all his ministers of every denomination, and esteem all to be such, who love and preach Jesus Christ? Do I love to hear them preach concerning Christ; and are no doctrines so sweet, as those that treat of him and his glorious undertaking for poor sinners; of our way of recovery to the favour and likeness of God by his dying for us, and by his Spirit working in us repentance, faith, and evangelical obedience? Do I constantly and fervently pray for his ministers, and for their success? And do I readily and heartily give them all the encouragement in their work which I am capable of? Do I love all his people, all who have his Spirit in them, and who walk according to his gospel, under all their various and differing forms? Do I feel my heart knit to them in the bonds of the Spirit, as members of the same body, and belonging to the same Lord and Head? Are such in my eyes, however poor, however despised any of them may be, the excellent of the earth, in whom is all my delight? Are such my chosen and delightful companions, my most dear and intimate friends? And are no hours spent so agreeably to me, as those I spend with them in pious conversation and religious exercises? Do I love them not in word only, but in deed and in truth, ready to help the poorest and meanest

of them according to my ability; and do I count it my honour and happiness to do so? Do I love his interest, and is it infinitely dearer to me than any particular interest of my own? Do I lament its low and languishing state in the world? Am I praying for its glorious revival? And is it the rejoicing of my heart to see or hear of its prosperity in any place, and under any denomination of Christians? If Christ is preached, and the interest of real religion is promoted, wherever it is, and whoever be the instruments, do I therein rejoice sincerely? Do I cheerfully contribute all that lies in my power to promote the interests of Christ in the world, and esteem it the principal end and greatest pleasure of my life to do any thing to advance it?

3. Do I love him above every creature and thing; and is he dearer to me than father or mother, son or daughter, house or land, yea than the whole world? Do I see infinitely more loveliness and excellence in Christ, than in all creatures put together, and more happiness in his love alone, than all the love and all the enjoyments the whole world can yield? Do I desire, more ardently desire, an interest in him, than in any of the blessings of life? While others are saying, Who will show us any good? are my daily, my ardent cries to God, Give me Christ, or I die; deny me any thing, every thing else, only grant me Christ, and I am satisfied? Do I see Christ alone suited to all my wants, sufficient to answer all my desires, and therefore in him only can my soul centre and rest? Had I rather part with all, than part with him; rather part with friends, relations, the world, yea, with life itself, than part with his love; rather endure the greatest sufferings, and meet death in its most terrible forms, than incur his displeasure, lose his favour, and all my pleasing hopes of an everlasting enjoyment of him? Will neither health nor friends, peace nor plenty, satisfy me, if I am in the dark with regard to my interest in him? If he hides himself, and stands afar off, though I am in the midst of every other comfort, do I mourn and sigh after him whom my soul loveth? Do I feel no rest till I find him, and am favoured with some token of his gracious presence, some discovery of his love? Is one smile of Jesus, one discovery of his love to my soul, infinitely more to me than all the honours and smiles of the world, and does

it create a joy in my heart, which a smiling world cannot give, nor a frowning world take away?

4. Do I love to obey him in every thing? Is there not one of his commandments, which I count grievous? Is there not any part of my duty that I owe him, which I desire to be excused from? Do I esteem all his precepts in all things to be right, all reasonable in themselves, all conducive to my truest happiness? Do I perform what he requires of me, not by constraint, but willingly and of a ready mind, from a principle of love to him, and a conviction of the goodness of all his commands? Is it my meat to do his will? And do I only long to do it better, to do it perfectly, as it is done by the angels in heaven? Is it my sincere desire, my daily prayer, that every thought and every temper, every word and every action, may be brought into an entire subjection to Christ? Is it in some good measure so, and wherein it is not, do I lament it as my infelicity, and groan under it as my burden?

5. Do I give up my whole self, all I am, and all I have, to his service? Sensible I am ransomed by his death, and saved by his merits, that all I enjoy, and all I hope for, is the purchase of his blood and the free gift of his grace, do I dedicate all to him, and his glory; my soul with all its powers, my body with all its members, my time, my worldly possessions, and all the influence and authority I have over others? Can I say from my heart, For me to live is Christ? Do I know no higher end in life, than to live to his glory, and feel no pleasure equal to promoting it? Is it the greatest pleasure I have in the possession of any talent, to employ it for Christ? And had I much rather spend and lay out for him, in relieving his people's wants, or in supporting and furthering his gospel, than to lay up for myself? Do I think I can never do too much, never do enough, in promoting the cause, and serving the interest of such a friend? Is life itself, with all its various blessings, desirable in no other view, than as giving an opportunity of glorifying Christ? Am I often thinking, often with pleasure devising, how I may bring glory to my Saviour, and advance the honour of him, who, though he "was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, for me and my salvation, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and humbled himself

unto death, even the death of the cross? Is it my principal concern, my labour, and my prayer, that in every thing, both in life and in death, in time and to all eternity, Christ who loved me, and died for me on earth, and now lives for me in heaven, may be magnified by me?

6. Do I feel ardent desires after the nearest and fullest enjoyment of him in the heavenly world? Could I be contented in no condition, though the happiest this earth could yield, to live always at this distance from him? Will no enjoyment of him here, though ever so sweet, and though it be infinitely better than any other enjoyment whatever, fully satisfy me? Rather, doth every visit which he has condescended to make me in his ordinances below, only set my heart more on fire, and create more ardent desires for those brighter visions of his face, those fuller discoveries of his love, that intimate, uninterrupted, and everlasting enjoyment of him, which is to be had within the veil? Does the pleasing prospect of a happiness so great, raise my heart above all the tempting scenes of this world, exercise my frequent and most delightful meditations, and create a joy in my breast, which is often unspeakable, and full of glory?

Now let me, O my soul, upon this fresh Mark of Salvation, ask thee again this important question, What sayest thou? Let me charge thee to be faithful, and endeavour to draw a just conclusion. And do I love Christ? Yes, O my soul, if I know any thing, I must know this, that Jesus is precious, precious in every character, in every view, more precious than ten thousands of gold and silver, and all that is counted dear by men in general; so precious, that I hope I have parted with every sin, even that which so often besets me, every thing that stands in competition with Christ, and lays claim to my heart, and have welcomed the Lord Jesus to my soul. Nay, had I ten thousand souls, I think, if I mistake not, I am sure, I would commit them all to his care, and devote them all to his service, to honour him here in life, and to love and praise him for ever.—Bless God then, and rejoice.

FOURTH.

As many as are *led by the Spirit of God*, they are the Sons of God. Rom. viii. 14.

QUEST. IV. *Am I led by the Spirit of God?*

1. Am I led to a humbling sight of myself; to see my meanness and dependence as a creature; that I am brought out of nothing into existence by God, and am supported every moment of my existence by him; that in him I live, and move, and have my being? Am I led to see I owe all I am and have, to the mere goodness and mercy of God, and hold it entirely at his sovereign will and pleasure? Am I led to acknowledge, with humble gratitude, that in every instance wherein I am superior to, or better than others, it is God who makes me to differ? Am I led to see my vileness and unworthiness as a sinner, the universal depravity of my heart, and the innumerable transgressions of my life? led to see the sins that cleave to and pollute my best tempers, and my holiest duties; that if a righteous God were to mark my iniquities, even the iniquities of the best day I ever lived, the best duty I ever performed, I must unavoidably perish? Seeing I deserve nothing, having forfeited every thing by my sins, am I led to look for all from God in a way of mere mercy and grace, thankful for every crumb he bestows upon me? Convinced that I have by my sins deserved to be for ever miserable, am I led to be patient and resigned under every affliction it pleases God to exercise me with? Sensible of my own weakness and insufficiency for any thing that is spiritually good, am I led continually to seek and depend upon the grace of God; and, when any good is done by me, to say with humble thankfulness, Not I, but the grace of God which was with me?

2. Am I led to the Lord Jesus Christ, as the one Mediator between God and man, as the way, the truth, and the life, the only way by which I can attain to the knowledge and likeness, the love and enjoyment, of the blessed God? Am I led to submit to his teaching as my unerring prophet, and to embrace, with the greatest readiness and fullest assent of soul, all his doctrines, however mysterious to reason, as well as to consent cheerfully and with my whole heart to all his precepts, however contrary any of them may be to flesh and blood? Am I led to repose all the hope and confidence of my soul, in his atonement, obedience, and intercession, as my holy and

ever acceptable High Priest ; and to yield a most ready, willing, and universal subjection to his government, as my exalted Sovereign and rightful Lord? Am I led to look to him as the great Head of divine influence, from whose fulness, as the everflowing, overflowing fountain of all grace, I most thankfully receive all my supplies in my spiritual life? Am I led to view him as my perfect pattern? Is his lovely example always before my eyes ; and does it both charm my heart and direct my steps?

3. Am I led to the blessed God as the source of my being and happiness, in whose favour is my life, and whose loving-kindness is better than life? Am I led to seek his favour in Christ with my whole heart ; to cry out with intenseness and ardour of soul, Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon me? Am I led to God as a humble penitent? Do I come before him, confessing and lamenting my sins, abhorring myself, and repenting in dust and ashes? Am I led to condemn myself in his presence, and to acknowledge that he would be righteous, and even glorify his justice in my eternal condemnation? Am I led, however, to hope in his mercy, through Christ, and thankfully and joyfully to submit to the way of pardon and acceptance with him, which he proposes in the gospel of his dear Son? Am I led to lay hold of the covenant of grace, and do I take God in Christ as the only and supreme blessedness of my soul, my all-sufficient and everlasting portion? Am I led to take him as my Lord, as well as my portion, and to give up myself sincerely and entirely to him? Convinced of his right to all I am and have, and grieved at the heart, that I have so ungratefully and wickedly alienated from him what was so entirely his own, am I led to devote and dedicate my whole self, and all I enjoy, to his service and glory, desiring his gracious acceptance of the surrender, and ambitious of nothing more than to be his, and to glorify God with my body and spirit, with all my powers and capacities, which are his? Am I led to maintain and cherish in my heart a supreme love and veneration for him, as the greatest and best of beings ; an ardent desire after him, as my only and all-satisfying portion ; and cordial gratitude towards him, as my supreme Benefactor, to whom I am obliged for my being, and every blessing of it? Am I led to live under a continual sense of his presence ; and

is that presence the delight of my heart? Am I led to frequent meditation on him; to study his word; pour out my prayers and praises at his footstool; to trust cheerfully in his providence; to believe firmly his promises; to be devoted to his fear; to be resigned to his will; to do all to his glory; to labour, long, and pray, for growing conformity to him here, and for the perfect likeness and everlasting enjoyment of him in heaven.

4. Am I led to maintain suitable regards to the blessed Spirit? Am I led to love and honour him, as the great Author of divine light and life, grace and comfort; exceedingly to prize, and most gratefully to acknowledge, his illuminating and sanctifying, his quickening and comforting influences; to maintain a deep and humble sense of my continual dependence upon his divine agency, and earnestly to seek his gracious and powerful influences, to fit me for every duty, to cherish every grace and virtue in my heart, to strengthen me under every trial, and to render me superior to every temptation and every corruption? Do I give up myself sincerely and entirely to his gracious and heavenly conduct, watchful of, and thankful for, all his holy motions, and desirous to yield myself to them, that I may be led on by him from one degree of faith, and love, and zeal, and holiness, to another, till I appear perfect before God in Zion? Do I earnestly desire and most joyfully welcome his continual residence in my heart, consecrating it to his presence as the temple of God? And am I careful to abstain from those sins which tend to grieve him, and provoke him to depart from me, dreading such an event as the greatest misery that can befall my soul? Am I led to admire and adore the sovereignty and freeness, the riches and the efficacy, of his grace towards me, and, with the greatest thankfulness and pleasure, to ascribe all the praise and glory of whatever good is in me, or done by me, to his powerful and gracious operation alone?

5. Am I led to the means of grace? Are divine ordinances considered as my choicest privileges, rather than as painful duties? Instead of being tempted to slight and neglect them, do I most willingly, joyfully, and thankfully embrace every opportunity of attending them, and grieve for it, as a great loss to my soul, when I am by

any circumstances deprived of those precious seasons? Do I attend them not more from the command of God, which I would not wish to be dispensed with, than from such a love and desire to them as the new-born babe desires the milk? Am I led to them as the sweet and delightful channels, through which God communicates his grace to me, and I enjoy communion with him? Do I seek his presence in them, and edification and growth through them? Do I lament that duty and ordinance as lost, in which God is not enjoyed, and grace exercised? Do I at times sweetly experience in them a holy nearness to God, and gracious communications of light, life, love, and joy from him? Are such seasons exceedingly sweet, and is one hour thus enjoyed better than a thousand? And when I am obliged to quit those delightful seasons, and to intermit for a while those precious duties, in which so much of heaven and of God is enjoyed, to attend the necessary engagements of life, is it my greatest joy to think of spending an eternity thus, and am I longing to enter upon it?

6 Am I led to behold sin with the greatest abhorrence; far greater than the delight which I once took in it, when my heart and life were led captive by it? Do I now abhor myself on account of it, and does it grieve me to the heart to reflect how much and how long I was under the power of it? Is it the object of my abhorrence, not merely on account of its dreadful consequences to myself, in the shame, guilt, and misery it has brought upon my own soul; but am I chiefly led to hate it on account of its deformity, baseness, and malignity; as committed against a God of infinite love and goodness, to whom I owe my very being, and all the unnumbered blessings of it, and whose laws are all holy, just and good; as committed against a bleeding and dying Jesus, and as the procuring cause of all his groans and tears, his bitter pains and sufferings? Does this abhorrence of sin engage me to a steady and vigorous, a constant and universal war with it? Is no sin, no not the least, allowed and indulged by me; but am I led sincerely to hate, watch, strive, and pray against all sin, and more especially that sin which does most easily beset me? Does every degree of victory over it give me the greatest pleasure, and excite the greatest thankfulness; and while I carry the remainder of sin about me, do

I groan under it, as my greatest burden, sigh after a complete deliverance as the greatest mercy, and rejoice in the hope of it through Jesus Christ?

7. Am I led to love and delight in holiness? Do I see holiness to be the health and beauty, the perfection and felicity of my soul? Do I see an inexpressible glory in a holy God, a holy Jesus, a holy Bible, and a holy life? Had I infinitely rather be the poorest and most afflicted saint, than the richest and most prosperous sinner? Is holiness the great object of my aim, my labour, and my prayers? Am I more earnest with God for sanctifying grace, than for any temporal mercy, and more joyful and thankful to find I grow in grace, than that I increase in my worldly substance? Do I attend on divine ordinances to improve me in holiness, and do I sincerely desire that every providence may be sanctified to the same end? And can I welcome those afflictions which my heavenly Father sends, that make me more partaker of his holiness? Am I thankful above all things for the least degree of holiness, and do I rejoice in it as happiness begun; yet, not contented with the greatest present attainments, is my soul enlarged, and does it long for nothing short of being filled with all the fulness of God? Do I lament more the imperfection of my graces, than all the troubles of life; and long more for heaven, as a state of perfect and everlasting holiness, than of freedom from pain and trouble? Is this the heaven I long for, to behold the face of God in righteousness; and shall I then be satisfied, and not till then, when I awake in his likeness?

8. Am I led to an unfeigned and universal love and benevolence? Is my heart freed from those disquieting, as well as deformed passions, malice, hatred, and envy? And is it full of kind and tender affections? Am I led to breathe forth my warmest wishes and prayers for others, and do I feel joy in their prosperity? Am I led tenderly to sympathize with the afflicted? Does it give me sensible pleasure to alleviate their burdens, and do I desire from my heart to adore the Divine goodness for such opportunities of usefulness? Is my love diffused to all mankind; not confined to one sect or party, to one people or kingdom, but spread wide as the world, and springing forward with the greatest delight to promote the temporal or spiritual welfare of any of my fellow creatures? Is my heart

often meditating benevolent schemes, often devising liberal things, and is it matter of the greatest joy and thankfulness, when I can accomplish them? Am I ambitious of no greater glory, do I seek no greater pleasure in life, than in doing good? And is this in my esteem the greatest pleasure which the possession of riches or any other talent can afford, that it renders me capable of being a greater blessing, and of doing more extensive good? Am I led to love my enemies? Can I overlook their injuries; or, if too great to be overlooked, can I heartily forgive them, and design no other revenge than to overcome their evil with good, and constrain them, if possible, to a better temper by seeking every opportunity to do them service? Is that sacred precept, so hard to corrupt nature, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink," wrought by the blessed Spirit into my heart? And am I led by him, the Spirit of love, sweetly and readily to conform to it as occasion offers, and thus prove myself to be the child of my Father which is in heaven, who is kind to the unthankful and to the evil?

9. Am I led to heaven? Am I led to such believing views of the glory and happiness of the heavenly world, as beget in my heart the highest esteem of it, the most ardent desires after it, and the greatest solicitude and concern to obtain it? Am I led to look upon all the splendour and glory, all the pleasures and enjoyments of this world, as not worthy a single thought or wish, when compared with heaven; and could I willingly renounce my all below, to be assured of my interest in the joys above? Am I led to consider the happiness of heaven, as consisting in the knowledge and likeness, in the love and enjoyment, of the blessed God; and in this view of it, does it appear most amiable and delightful to me, and do I most ardently aspire to it, most earnestly wish to be made partaker of it? Am I led to fix all my hopes and expectations of heaven upon the divine promises, endeavouring daily to cleanse myself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God? Am I led to delight in the work and business of heaven, in the holy contemplation of God, and in meditation on the grace and glories of the blessed Redeemer; and are approaches to and converse with God through Christ, in the duties of religious worship, esteemed by me as the

sweetest pleasures I know? Am I led to exercise the greatest care and watchfulness, lest a promise being left me of heaven and eternal life, I should at last come short of it, through a heart of unbelief, and a prevailing love to this world? Do I feel no fear, do I dread no evil, so great as this; and is it my daily prayer to God, that of his infinite mercy he would prevent it? Am I led only to expect heaven in the way of holiness and obedience, and yet not in the least to hope for it for the sake of my holiness and obedience—being sensible the strictest is deficient, and the best is polluted? When I have done all, am I led to expect, and made willing to receive, eternal life as the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord?

THE CONCLUSION

Are these the marks of salvation? Are they what God has laid down as the genuine characters of his people and not the imaginations of men? If then I have been enabled to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; if I have received him in all the characters in which he is represented in the gospel; if I indeed love him, and am led by his Spirit, I may then comfortably conclude, that I belong to his family; that I was given to him by the Father, purchased by the blood of the Son, and am now under the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, that I may be fitted for the enjoyment of God in heaven. And may I draw this conclusion? Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Lift up thy head, and see salvation is drawing near. What is the consequence of faith but salvation; a complete and everlasting salvation? They are Christ's own words, the words of him who cannot lie, He that believeth shall be saved. See, my soul, thou art a son, a child of God! this, this is the distinguishing honour which he has put upon all who have received Christ, and are led by his Spirit. And has God put this mark and distinction upon me; a creature in every view so unworthy of his notice? How rich, how amazing the grace! What matter of rejoicing! A son of God! Let me dwell upon the sound! What honour, what happiness can be greater! If I am a child of God, I shall be the constant care of his providence here, and shall have every want supplied, and be safe, living

and dying. And what shall I be hereafter, when I come to receive a child's portion? Look forward, O my soul—see the delightful moment, when thou shalt wing thy way to the city of God above, and there join the church triumphant:—look still forward to the resurrection morning, when this body shall be raised and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body; when body and soul shall be reunited, be arrayed in all the garments of salvation, and appear in all the splendour and magnificence of a child of God. Surely, Lord, this is enough: I can no longer murmur under the dispensations of thy providence; no longer envy the prosperity of the wicked, or think religion vain. Do with me as thou pleasest. Afflictions, reproaches, persecutions, whatever may be for thy glory, I would submit to with the utmost cheerfulness. I would not seek my own peace, but in connection with the glory of my heavenly Father. Lord, give me more of a childlike temper, that I may honour thee more, living and dying. Do I not only love Christ, but does he love me? Has he graciously condescended to give this happy information, and to speak in this affectionate language? Oh, what is it to be a Christian? Time and eternity too must be employed in admiring the riches of sovereign grace, and praising God and the Lamb!

May I make this use of the discovery God has made to my soul of my being interested in and united to him. May I be kept from spiritual pride, and grow more in humility and love; that the clearer my evidences are of a title to a better world, the more I may not only rejoice, but improve this happy circumstance, to promote the glory of God, and to stir me up to greater activity and diligence in every part of his service; longing, ardently longing for that world, where I shall love him best, and be for ever like him. To this I would set my hearty Amen.

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